

Activity #4a: Observe Emotional Difficulties

Section 6: Emotional Difficulties

After watching each clip, write down the problem(s) that occurred for the child and the teacher's action(s).

Clip #1: Caden and the Bicycle (0:00 – 0:37)

The Problem(s):

- Caden wants Jordan's bicycle

The Teacher's Action(s):

- Offers alternate choices
- Acknowledges child's feelings

Clip #2: Feeling Sad (0:37 – 1:23)

The Problem(s):

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The Teacher's Action(s):

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Clip #3: Jordan and Caden during Circle Time (1:23 – 1:56)

The Problem(s):

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The Teacher's Action(s):

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Clip #4: Closeness (1:56 – 2:16)

The Problem(s):

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The Teacher's Action(s):

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Clip #5: Danae (2:16 – 3:49)

The Problem(s):

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The Teacher's Action(s):

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Clip #6: Caden and the Bunny Rabbit (3:49 - 5:37)

The Problem(s):

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The Teacher's Action(s):

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Effective Teaching Strategies for Children with Emotional Difficulties

1. Assign special tasks or chores

Most children enjoy the opportunity to complete special tasks for the teacher or the classroom. Children who are withdrawn or anxious are more likely to stay engaged in the classroom if given special chores.

2. Give children opportunities to shine

Children who are anxious often shine when teachers highlight all of the things they can accomplish. Teachers can identify areas where shy or withdrawn children excel and then give them opportunities to demonstrate and share their knowledge about particular topics or interests.

3. Encourage problem-solving

Children's self-esteem and feelings of worth are likely to increase when they are confident that they can solve problems. Teachers should encourage children to determine solutions to their own problems whenever possible and appropriate.

4. Avoid over-comforting

While it is important for teachers to be emotionally available to children, continual comforting of children who are anxious or withdrawn may worsen children's emotional difficulties. For example, when a teacher allows an anxious child to sit near the teacher at all recess periods, the child's anxiety about interacting with peers is unlikely to decrease; in fact, it may increase.

5. Share strategies for separation anxiety with parents

For separation anxiety, teachers can help parents make the transition at drop-off time less traumatic for children. In particular, teachers should encourage parents to:

- Remind children of the positive things that will happen at school
- Avoid prolonging their departure
- Be cheerful when saying goodbyes, then exit quickly
- Revisit positive things that happened at school after pickup
- Acknowledge (rather than dismiss) children's feelings

6. Recognize triggers and prepare

When teachers are aware of factors that can trigger emotional difficulties in children (e.g., fatigue, family changes, adaptations to new environments), they can be better prepared to deal with children's emotional difficulties.